

direction,

wherein the tapered inner surface is located intermediate the non tapered inner surface sections.

wherein the handle shaft includes non tapered outer surface sections extending in the axial direction,

wherein the tapered outer surface is located intermediate the non tapered outer surface sections.

wherein the sleeve sections are operative to respectively substantially correspond to engage the handle shaft sections to align the handle shaft relative to the door.

#### REMARKS

Independent claim 31 was amended to clarify that engagement between the tapered inner surface and the tapered outer surface occurs on the side of the door that is opposite from the handle lever side. The engaged tapered outer surface narrows in a direction away from the handle lever. A non tapered outer surface section of the handle shaft engages a non tapered inner surface section of the sleeve on the opposite side of the door to align the handle shaft relative to the door. None of the applied references teach or suggest having *both* tapered and non tapered engagement occurring on the opposite side of a door, especially with the other recited handle shaft features of removal prevention and alignment.

Respectfully submitted,



Ralph E. Jocke  
WALKER & JOCKE  
231 South Broadway  
Medina, Ohio 44256  
(330) 721-0000

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